

Walking This Journey Together: Recovery Partners

Why We Come #6: We believe the sharing of our life journey with God and with each other is beneficial and healing for all of us.

It has always been God's plan that we share our lives together. God has acted first on this principle by sending Jesus to earth to show us His love and then by filling our hearts with the Holy Spirit who walks with us every moment of our lives to speak encouragement and healing and to empower us to walk in God's love. We are invited to follow God's example as disciples of Christ - doing what He did.

So everywhere we go, we tell everyone about Christ. We warn them and teach them with all the wisdom God has given us, for we want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. I work very hard at this, as I depend on Christ's mighty power that works within me. (Colossians 1)

Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing. (Philippians 2)

A recovery partner is someone who can be a loving witness to our new life and who can also provide perspective on our spiritual journey. He or she is someone who can appreciate what we are doing and how we are growing. We look for a partner/mentor/sponsor who can keep a confidence and listen with empathy. We seek someone who will not criticize us, but who will be able to suggest to us any obvious omissions or to give us insight into how the nature of our wrongs has affected us.

It is a true saying that if someone wants to be a guide/mentor, they desire an honorable responsibility. For a guide must be a person whose life cannot be spoken against. He/she must demonstrate faithfulness, exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. The mentor must enjoy being hospitable and must be able to teach. They must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He/she must be gentle, peace loving, and not one who loves money. A spiritual guide must be someone who demonstrates an ability to draw out respect and love from others and one who has integrity. They must be committed to the revealed truths of the Christian faith and

must live with a clear conscience. Before they are appointed as leaders and models, they should be given other responsibilities as a test of their character and ability. If they do well, then they may serve as models or guides. (adapted from 1 Timothy 3)

While we look for a recovery partner we can respect, that person does not belong on a pedestal. He or she is not someone with all the answers all of the time. They make mistakes. They are human. Sometimes they will display imperfections. Recovery partners share their experience, strength, and hope, along with their understanding of the Twelve Steps of recovery. They offer support, suggestions, and caring, and over time we develop a basis for trust as we share our lives back and forth. A recovery partnership is a friendship made up of two individuals listening to God and learning from one another -- two people learning a new way to live, one day at a time.

If another Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. (Galatians 6)

A recovery partner helps us learn how to receive love, and how to pass it on. We can best put what we have learned into practice by passing it on. What do we have to give? How can we be there for someone else without losing our own sense of person? We don't have to be a Saviour, only a helper, whose example and experience might lead the other person forward in his or her own recovery. Being someone's partner provides us with a chance to share intimately, to care, to practice detaching with love, and to apply spiritual principles more consciously than ever.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Why is it important for us to support one another?
2. Why do we need an outside look at our thoughts and circumstances?
3. What benefits do we both receive from a recovery partnership?
4. What does God promise us if we pray for one another and encourage each other?
5. What makes it difficult to trust another person with our story and our ongoing situation?
6. How am I making myself available to others to pray for them and offer a listening ear to their journey and their needs?